

Remnant Life Church
June 29, 2025
Navigating the Stormy Waters
Habakkuk 1:1-6

Amid the storms raging in our nation today, how should we live?

- We look at how the people around us act.
- Should you, as a child of God be different?
- I think we know that the answer to that is yes, but how?

This morning we are going to be reading from what might be considered an obscure part of the Bible

- I only say that because you would be hard pressed to remember the last time you heard a teaching or sermon from this book
- It is one of the minor prophets from the end of the OT
 - Not minor in importance
 - But minor in terms of length
 - The major prophets are the long books of the OT like Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah
- But this book, while only 3 brief chapters, is very unique in its content and it holds important truths for us today in 2025
- It is the book of Habakkuk

The Prophet

- We know little more about the man than what is revealed in the book itself
 - In **1:1** and **3:1** he calls himself “the prophet”
 - He may have been schooled in OT law at a prophetic school which had been operating in the days of Samuel
 - Or he may have been a priest who performed regular priestly duties although it is likely he would have identified himself as such
 - And unlike most prophetic books where the prophet is speaking to the people, this book is a dialog between Habakkuk and God
 - First, Habakkuk wants to know why God is allowing the sins of the people to go unpunished
 - God replies that He has a plan in place to bring judgment – in the person of the Babylonians
 - Habakkuk wants to then know why God would use such an evil people to mete out His judgment
 - Finally, God assures the prophet that there is coming a day when all unrighteousness will come under His divine judgement.

The setting of his writing is important and requires a brief history lesson on the development of God’s people as a nation

- Saul, the first king, begins his reign in approximately 1050 BC, followed by David and then Solomon

- These three men ruled Israel for 120 years ending in 930
- Upon Solomon's death the nation divides into a northern kingdom called Israel (10 tribes)
- Southern kingdom of 2 tribes - Judah and Benjamin
- Over the next 208 years Israel (northern kingdom) is ruled by 19 kings and every one of them is evil in the sight of God
 - It is captured in 722 BC by the Assyrian army
 - And it would be 2770 years before Israel would become a nation again
- The southern kingdom (Judah) did have godly kings through their history but, even so, more than half of their 20 kings were evil in their 344 years of existence
 - The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem in 586 BC and carried off the people into captivity or exile (prophets and writings of Daniel; Ezekiel; Jeremiah)

Habakkuk is likely writing around 600 to 605 BC meaning he is calling on God prior to the invasion of the Babylonians

READ – Habakkuk 1:1-6

- Habakkuk's name means to "embrace" or "wrestle"
 - His name fits the tone and content of his book as he "wrestles" with, not only the sin of God's people, but why God has not done something about it
 - It has only about 115 years since the Assyrians captured the northern kingdom of Israel, but the sin of the people is continuing unabated
 - The lesson of consequence for sin has not been learned
 - Habakkuk does not understand why God continues to allow the sin to go unpunished and unchanged

Habakkuk "reminds" God of the condition of the nation and its people -

- **Verse 2** - *How long, LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not save?*
 - Habakkuk has evidently been praying a long time regarding the sin of the people
 - He has come to the place where he is not even sure God hears him
 - The prophet is hurting to the core of his being regarding the sin of God's people
 - Everyone, at one time or another, feels as if something in their life is, or could be, overwhelming
 - Struggles and difficulties are a part of our lives because of sin
 - **Matt 13** – the parable of the sower where the seeds are often snatched away
 - **13:20** – *When trouble or persecution comes...*
- Christians will most often respond to the trials of everyday life in 1 of 3 ways:
 - Resigned to just living with the struggles, learning to live with their effect, and just getting by each day as best they can (Eek-Christians)
 - Others become cynical and hardened; defensive and always ready to attack first in order to protect themselves

- But there are also those who get into the ring every day and wrestle through each challenge calling on God as their help, their strength, and their joy
- **James 1:2-4** - *Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*
 - James tells us that we should view our trials in a way the recognizes and embraces the opportunities God gives us during those times
- Habakkuk continues
- **Verse 3** - *Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrongdoing? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds.*
 - Let's be honest...this verse could be taken from the front page of any newspaper in America or any news web site
 - Injustice can best be described by 2 questions you will often hear:
 - Why do bad things happen to good people?
 - Why do the evil prosper?
 - This is certainly one of the most difficult things for us to reconcile.
 - Justice means that things happen as they should – in fairness
 - Unfortunately, that is often not the case
 - Habakkuk speaks of strife and conflict in their time
 - Has there ever been a time in our history when our nation has been more divided?
 - The Civil War in the 1860's; the heightened racial tension of the 1960's; and today a nation that would appear to be coming apart
 - Habakkuk asks God what many Christians should also be seeking an answer to – what is to be done about the condition of our country?
 - Is there anything that I can do?
 - Before we answer that Habakkuk brings up another concern that is prevalent for today
- **Verse 4** - *Therefore (or, because of all this) the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.*
 - Justice is perverted – IOW the laws of the land are not only being ignored but they are being used as a tool to accomplish a particular objective
 - It was that way then and it is certainly that way today
 - In this country, illegal immigration has been prevalent for the last several years
 - I don't pretend to understand all that is involved in the politics of this issue
 - But what part of the word “illegal” is suddenly confusing so many people?
 - **Isa 5:20** - *Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.*
 - This is the time we live in today, just as Habakkuk did over 2700 years ago
 - And because of that we are asking the same primary question that Habakkuk did
 - WHERE ARE YOU GOD?!?

I would like to offer three things to consider as we attempt to navigate the stormy waters

Three things I believe Habakkuk might have wanted to say to the people -

1. All Christians must deal with the problem of evil, not embrace it, but deal with it.
 - a. **John 16:33** – “...*In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*”
 - b. The thinkers of this world cannot understand this verse
 - c. Allow me to introduce you to a sylllogism
 - i. This is an argument that has a primary premise; a secondary premise; and is then followed by a conclusion based on the two premises
 - ii. So here is the world’s syllogism regarding God and evil
 - iii. If God is all-powerful and loving, He would put a stop to evil. Evil has not been stopped. Therefore, either God is not all-powerful, or He is not loving.
 - iv. This is what the world thinks of God, and I can assure you that they are wrong on both accounts
 1. He is all-powerful
 2. And His is loving
 - d. In his book *Why Bad Things Happen to Good People*, the author, Harold Kushner argued that God is loving, He just isn’t able to stop the evil
 - e. Kushner is right that God is loving but to state that God cannot stop evil is to deny God’s omnipotence
 - i. That is what the dualist believes that the power of sin and evil is equal to or in some cases even greater than God
 - f. But dealing with the problem of evil is not defined by our limited understanding or comprehension
 - g. It is defined by the measure of our faith and trust in our loving, merciful, gracious, all-powerful God
 - h. Evil is very much present in our world today, but it still must come under the headship and authority of Almighty God!

Christians must live in a world that is filled with evil, but we rest in the knowledge that God is greater

2. You should use your struggles with evil to draw you closer to God, not cause you to withdraw
 - a. Did Habakkuk withdraw in the face of the wickedness that was all around him?
 - b. No – he took it to God, he was honest as he cried out, and then waited for God to answer
 - c. Can you truly be honest with God when you pray?
 - i. Jesus was very honest with His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane (**Luke 22:42**)
 - ii. David was honest with God in His prayers when King Saul was trying to catch and kill him (**Psalms 18**)

- iii. Elijah was honest with God when he was hiding in a cave from Jezebel (**I Kings 19**)
 - d. God's answers did not always bring understanding or even comfort (**Hab. 1:5-11**)
 - e. But they did bring the circumstances into the proper perspective of God's might and power regardless of the physical circumstances we are witnessing
 - f. Draw closer to God in the times of the storms
- 3. Even as we, like Habakkuk, cannot understand why there is so much evil raging around us, our response to it is to pray, not enter into the sin of what is happening, but to be a light in a dark place, and find our joy in the Lord
 - a. Again, Christians should not withdraw because of the presence of evil
 - b. Our nation desperately needs godly, spirit-filled, selfless leaders
 - c. And we certainly cannot be those who add fuel to the fire
 - i. You say, "I'm just one voice, what difference can I make?"
 - 1. John the Baptist was just one voice and look what God commissioned him to do – prepare the way for the Son of God to come
 - 2. Paul was one voice and God used him to be the first great missionary to spread the message of God's love and salvation through Jesus Christ
 - 3. Billy Graham was only one voice and God used him to preach the Word to millions
 - ii. Like the little boy with the loaves and fishes, just give God what you have, and He will multiply it to accomplish His will (**Matt 14**)

Navigating the storms means that we deal with the evil, we desire to draw closer to God, and we must refuse to contribute to the hate and division

- We are called to be different
- We are called to be a light in the dark places
- And to show the power of God's love to heal the wounded and brokenness you are sure to encounter - wherever He leads you and through whatever storms you will need to endure!